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MR. BINKS FROM BINKTOWN.

A FARCE IN ONE ACT.

By Dr. Albert Carr.

PRICE TWENTY FIVE CENTS.

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FIRST EDITION.

HILL CITY S. D.

1910

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

JEREMIAH POPPLETON.
Alias Mr. Binks from Binktown.

MARK HORTON. A young lawyer.

ETHELINDA POPPLETON.
Jeremiah's fascinating young wife seeking divorce.

FANNY FENTON.
Horton's stenographer.

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MR. BINKS FROM BINKTOWN.

ACT I.

SCENE. *Waiting-room in the office of Mark Horton at Sioux Falls, S. D. Door in rear scene, R. with the words "Private Office" on it. Door, L. Screen, left front. Fanny Fenton discovered seated at type-writer, type-writing.*

Fanny. (*Working type-writer.*) *Sioux Falls, S. D.*—that's done, and I am glad of it. These divorce cases are very hard on the machine. They stir the feelings of the writer so. [*Reads.*] *Ethelinda Poppleton versus Jeremiah Poppleton.* [*To audience.*] Ethelinda is suing her husband, Jeremiah, for a divorce. Mark Horton is her attorney. Mrs. Poppleton is twenty four, and Mr. Poppleton, forty two. They have been married about four years. They have no children.

Her complaint is, that Mr. Poppleton is too humorously eccentric, and utterly void of any sentimental refinement. Upon this plea she bases her action for divorce. Mr. Poppleton is quite wealthy. He deals in fast horses. I am sure he is a sport. I like sports. I believe I'd like him. Mrs. Poppleton is very handsome, and she knows it. Mr. Horton seems to know it, too. Mrs Poppleton came here to Sioux Falls about a month ago. Mr. Poppleton is back home in Indiana. Mark Horton appears very much interested in his client, Mrs. Poppleton. If he comes spooning around me again, I'll remind him of that fact.

Enter Mark Horton from private office.

Mark. Well, sweetheart, how are you getting along with Poppleton versus Poppleton?

Fanny. I am not your sweetheart, Mark Horton, I am your stenographer.

Mark. It amounts to the same thing. When a lawyer selects his stenographer, he selects her because—

Fanny. Because, what?

Mark. Because—she suits him.

Fanny. Does he accept his female clients on the same grounds?

Mark. Well, no—hardly. As soon as you have that testimony type-written, place it on my desk. I am going to the bank. If Mrs. Poppleton should come, while I am out, tell her I will return shortly, and show her into my private office.

Fanny. (*Snappishly.*) What will she do there alone—without you?

Mark. Wait—wait for my return.

[*Exit at door, L.*

Fanny. The wretch! He has been trifling with my affections. I ought to sue him for breach of promise. I will do something—something that will learn him to love one woman at a time.

[*Slams type-writer; bundles up papers, and with papers in hand, exits into private office, banging door behind her.*

Enter Jeremiah Poppleton at door, L. Is in rich but sporty dress. Has gold-headed cane, diamonds and red plaid vest.

Jeremiah. Well, here you are, Jeremiah Poppleton. My wife is here, and I am here. I know she is here, but she

don't know I am here. Here, I can observe her, without being observed. She's after a divorce. I'm after her. Oh, she's a canary! Just now, she's on the wing. While she flies high, I'll lay low. I can't give up my canary. If she gets a divorce, she'll have to do some wise work. I have registered at the hotel as Mr. Binks from Binktown. I told them Binktown was in Indiana, but not on the map. When I told them, it was not on the map, I told them a positive truth. [*Looks around room.*] This is the place. [*Takes card out of pocket and reads.*] *Mark Horton, Attorney at law, Sioux Falls, S. D.* [*Indicates with wave of hand.*] That's his private office—his bird trap. [*Puts card in pocket.*] I wish I had more gush, more rosy-posy, morning dew, but I haven't got it, so I'll have to play my game with the joker up my sleeve. Huh, morning dew! If it were bills due, I'd be there with a flush. The first card I shall play in this game of skipaloo is to employ my wife's lawyer to do some business for Mr. Binks from Binktown. I'll engage him to look up some good local investment for forty or fifty thousand. That will direct his

attention to *me*. Mrs. Poppleton has the beauty, but I have the money. I am sure her lawyer will reach for the long-green. They all do. I don't see anybody around here. Oh, well! I've plenty of time. I'll just sit down and wait until someone comes. [*Sees screen.*] If Mrs. Poppleton should come, that will serve to conceal me. Then I can slip out when she's not looking, or otherwise engaged. I am afraid she's otherwise engaged, just now. [*Grins.*] Oh, she's a canary! [*Goes behind screen, and sits down in chair. Takes out cigar. Is about to light it.*] No, that won't do. The smoke would give me away. [*Returns cigar to pocket.*] Binks don't smoke.

Enter Fanny from private office with sheet of paper.

Fanny. Here is another page of Poppleton vs. Poppleton. I thought I had finished the whole of that nonsense.

Jeremiah. (*Coming from behind screen.*) You don't seem to care for nonsense. You want the solid and the real—the coin with the ring to it.

Fanny. (*Startled.—Angrily.*) How do you know, what I want?

Jeremiah. How do I know a sensible young woman, when I see her?

Fanny. (*Placated.*) Who are you?

Jeremiah. I'm Mr. Binks from Binktown.

Fanny. Binktown!

Jeremiah. Yes, Binktown—Binktown, Indiana.

Fanny. I don't remember ever having seen that town on the map.

Jeremiah. It isn't on the map.

Fanny. Not on the map!

Jeremiah. No. I wouldn't let them put on.

Fanny. How could you prevent it?

Jeremiah. I own the town.

Fanny. Oh, that's it! Did you come to see Mr. Horton?

Jeremiah. No, I came to see you.

Fanny. To see me! I am Mr. Horton's stenographer.

Jeremiah. Well, if I get you first, I'll have no trouble getting him.

Fanny. What do you mean?

Jeremiah. I don't mean anything. Do you?

Fanny. I don't know what to make of you.

Jeremiah. Here is a hundred dollars for your good-will. [*Offers her money.*]

You can make that much of me.

Fanny. I can't take your money, sir.

Jeremiah. Reach out that pretty little hand of yours and try. There are no conditions attached to it but your good-will. And that, I'm going to have, if I have to buy you a diamond ring and an automobile.

Fanny. (*Aside.*) I have a strong suspicion this is Poppleton. I'll act on this suspicion, and teach Mark Horton a lesson, he'll not forget. (*Aloud.*) If I understand you, Mr. Binks—

Jeremiah. I am a friend of Poppleton's. Poppleton don't want his wife to get a divorce. I am here to prevent it. You are Horton's stenographer. Horton is Mrs. Poppleton's attorney. If I get the stenographer, I've got the lawyer. When I've got the lawyer, I've got the client. When I've got the client, Poppleton has got his wife. Take the money. If I win, I'll give you a thousand more.

Fanny. (*Suddenly.*) Give me the money.

Jeremiah. Here it is.

[*Gives her money.*

Fanny. [*Throwing arms around him.*] You're the dearest, sweetest man, I ever

met.

Jeremiah. What, so soon!

Fanny. I'm so glad!

Jeremiah. I—I didn't expect this, no, no,—not quite *so soon*.

Fanny. I didn't either. Oh, I'm so glad!

[*Hugs him.*

Jeremiah. Are you a grass widow?

Fanny. No, no! But I am so glad you are here. Your coming is most fortunate for me; most fortunate for you. Oh, you dear man!

[*Hugs him.*

Jeremiah. (*Embracing Fanny.*) This is a most pleasing surprise. I played the deuce of diamonds, and trumped the queen of hearts. [*Chuckles.*] What's your name?

Fanny. Fanny—Fanny Fenton. You can call me, Fanny.

Jeremiah. Oh, can I!

Fanny. Yes! What shall I call you?

Jeremiah. Why—er—er—er—call me, Binks.

Fanny. I'll call you, Binksy.

Jeremiah. Oh, you pet! [*Chucks her under chin.*] You'll help me won't you, Fanny?

Fanny. Indeed, I will.

Jeremiah. [*With arm over her shoulder.*] You believe I'm a man of honor; that you can trust me,—confide in me?

Fanny. It seems like it, judging from my present proximity.

Jeremiah. That's so! [*Chuckles.*] I ought not to have asked that question. How stupid of me!

Enter Mark Horton at door, L. Has rose in hand.

Fanny. (*Breaking from Jeremiah with slight scream.*) Oh. heavens!

Jeremiah. What's the matter? You're not [illegible]struck with heart failure? [*Sees Horton.*] Oh— (*Aside.*) I'll bet, this is Mr. Prunes, himself.

Mark. You seem to be quite at home here, sir.

Jeremiah. That's a peculiarity of mine. I always make myself at home wherever I am.

Fanny. (*Advancig.*) This is Mr. Horton, Mr. Binks. Mr. Horton, Mr. Binks from Binktown. Mr. Binks is an old friend of mine.

Mark. (*Bowing stiffly.*) Mr. Binks!

Jeremiah. (*Bowing stiffly.*) Mr Horton.

Fanny. Binktown is in Indiana. Mr.

Binks owns the town.

Mark. Ah, indeed!

Jeremiah. Through the kindness of my interesting young friend here, I have been directed to you. Possibly, I shall need the services of an attorney in certain affairs that may arise during my stay here. Here is a retainer of five hundred dollars. [*Offers Horton money.*] If I need you, you will have to act; if not, the money is yours.

Mark. What is the nature of the case, that is liable to arise?

Jeremiah. Civil—purely civil! Can't discuss it now.

Mark. (*Taking money.*) Very well, Mr. Binks, call on me when you need me. For the present, you will have to excuse me. I am expecting a lady client. Could you drop in, in an hour or two?

Jeremiah. (*Looking at watch.*) In a couple of hours? Yes, sir, most conveniently.

Mark. I am sorry, I can't chat with you now.

Jeremiah. A lady should always be first; first in the mind of man, though second in creation. She was made from the rib of man, and—and she's been

fond of *rib*-bons ever since.

Mark. (*With sour smile.*) Quite a conceit! I will be at leisure, sir, about four o'clock.

Jeremiah. (*Going.*) Very well, sir. (*Aside.*) He's cold—cold as an oyster on ice. I wonder, if he is in love with his stenographer. If he is, I jarred him.

[*Chuckles. Exit at door, L.*

Mark. So that is an old friend of yours?

Fanny. Yes.

Mark. He seems to have money.

Fanny. Money! He's worth a million.

Mark. You don't say!

Fanny. He was delighted to see me.

Mark. So I should judge. Is he married?

Fanny. You don't suppose, I would allow a married man such familiarity?

Mark. No—of course, not! Here is a rose I brought you.

[*Offers her rose.*

Fanny. Are you quite sure, you brought it for *me*?

Mark. For you, certainly. Take it.

Fanny. Well, I will. [*Takes rose, and throws it at private office door.*] There, give it to your client, Ethelinda Popple ton.

Mark. You astonish me!

Fanny. She is more entitled to it than I am.

Mark. Why, more entitled?

Fanny. Ask your own vacillating heart. Oh, well! you are not the only trout in the brook.

Mark. You are very unkind.

[*Picks up rose*

Fanny. Get Ethelinda her divorce and marry her, and you will soon forget my unkindness.

Mark. (*Aside.*) I guess she told the truth, that time.

[*Exit into private office, closing door behind him.*

Fanny. (*Dropping head in hands.*) Oh, misery, misery! What shall I do! Just as I begun to love him, I must lose him. [*Bristling up.*] Ethelinda shall not get a divorce, no, not if can prevent it.

Enter Jeremiah Poppleton at door, L. tiptoeing.

Jeremiah. (*In loud whisper, pointing to L.*) She's coming! She's coming!

Fanny. He is in there.

[*Points to private office.*

Jeremiah. Ethelinda's coming!

Fanny. Hush!

[*Jeremiah dodges behind screen and sits down.*

Enter Ethelinda Poppleton at door, L.

Ethelinda. Good afternoon, Fanny!

Jeremiah. (*Aside.*) Listen to that bird-like voice. That's Ethelinda.

Fanny. Good afternoon, Mrs. Poppleton!

Ethelinda. Is Mr. Horton in?

Fanny. He is in his private office.

Ethelinda. Oh, thank you!

Fanny. He is waiting for you.

Ethelinda. Is he! Well, I'll step right in.

[*Exit into private office. Closes door behind her. Fanny puts on hat.*

Jeremiah. She don't want to keep him waiting. She'd keep me waiting for a lifetime, if I'd let her. But I won't let her. No, not if I have to buy that lawyer by the pound, and pound him to death after I have bought him.

Fanny. (*Advancing to screen.*) I am going out in the air.

Jeremiah. (*Rising.*) Don't go! Wait! Come in here. I want to talk with you.

Fanny. I feel as if I should fly!

Jeremiah. Don't! Ethelinda is on the wing. Wait 'til she lights.

Fanny. I shall axplode!

Jeremiah. Don't—you might knock down this screen.

Fanny. Oh, dear!

Jeremiah. Don't worry. If Mrs. Poppleton gets a divorce, I'll marry you.

Fanny. Marry me?

Jeremiah. Yes; I'll make you Mrs. Binks from Binktown.

Fanny. You are awful good!

Jeremiah. That's what Poppleton said, when he sent me after his wife.

Fanny. Poppleton is a niddle-noddle.

Jeremiah. (*Aside.*) She don't know, that I am Poppleton.

Fanny. What shall I do!

Jeremiah. Come in here. We can pass the time as pleasantly as they can. We have all the chips in the game, they have. Come on—but bring a chair with you. There's only one chair in here. Of course, you wouldn't sit on my lap.

Fanny. What!

Jeremiah. No, not until Mrs. Poppleton gets a divorce.

Fanny. (*Taking off hat.*) You make

me laugh!

Jeremiah. Poppleton made Ethelinda laugh. Now she's trying to get a divorce from him. If I ever get her back—I mean, if Poppleton ever gets her back—

Fanny. (*Coming behind screen with chair.*) What are you talking about?

Jeremiah. About Poppleton. Say, what do you suppose they are doing in there now.

Fanny. Oh, passing a few compliments.

Jeremiah. I hope that's all.

Fanny. Why should it worry you? Mrs. Poppleton is nothing to you.

Jeremiah. No, she is nothing to Binks. Binks has no wife. But Poppleton *has.* Aren't you sorry for Poppleton?

Fanny. No; I'm sorry for Binks.

Jeremiah. Why are you sorry for Binks?

Fanny. Because he has no wife.

Jeremiah. (*Gazing at Fanny.*) Ah, you're a brown-eyed canary, yourself.

Fanny. Binks, you are the kind of man I like.

[*Hangs hat on chair and sits.*

Jeremiah. Why, Fanny?

[*Sits down in chair at left of*

Fanny.

Fanny. Because there's some fun in you.

Jeremiah. Yes, I'm about as full of those kind of feelings as any man you ever saw.

[*Chuckles.*

Fanny. Did you ever have a serious thought?

Jeremiah. No, not that I remember of. If I ever did, I didn't allow it to dog me.

Fanny. How did you get rid of it?

Jeremiah. I canned it.

Fanny. Are you going to stay in the city long?

Jeremiah. That depends entirely upon what happens in that office. [*Jumps up and peeps over screen.*] What do you suppose they are doing in there now?

Fanny. I came in here to be entertained, not to talk about them. [*Jumps up.*] I am desperate!

Jeremiah. What's the matter with you?

Fanny. Can't you see? Have you no sense? Don't you know *anything*? Are your brains in your head, or have you had them removed?

Jeremiah. (*Backing down.*) D—d if I understand you! You've got me treed.

Fanny. Can't you catch on? Can't you see, I am a heartbroken woman? A woman that needs sympathy, consolation, affection, adoration—

Jeremiah. Say, you don't expect to get that all in one lump, do you?

Fanny. I expect you to understand.

Jeremiah. I do understand, and we'll settle this matter right now. Will you marry Binks, if Mrs. Poppleton gets a divorce?

Fanny. I'll marry Binks, if Mrs. Poppleton never gets a divorce.

Jeremiah. (*Shaking head.*) No, that would be bigamy.

Fanny. Bigamy! Why, you are not married.

Jeremiah. I am glad you've told me. [*Peeps over screen.*] What do you suppose, they are doing in there now?

Fanny. I suppose her head is lying upon his breast, and his lips pressed to hers—

Jeremiah. The devil you say!

[*Starts to leave screen.*

Fanny. (*Grabbing his coat-tails.*) Where are you going?

Jeremiah. In that office to lay his

head on *my* breast.

[*Makes punching motions.*

Fanny. What's the matter with *you*? She's not your wife.

Jeremiah. (*Tragetically.*) How do you know she's not my wife?

Fanny. Because she is Poppleton's wife, and you are Binks—Binks from Binktown.

Jeremiah. (*Collapsing—comic.*) That's so, so I am.

[*Wipes face with large gaudy silk handkerchief.*

Fanny. Are you warm?

Jeremiah. Yes—under the collar.

[*Fanny laughs aside.*

Fanny. You said, you were going to entertain me.

Jeremiah. Did I? Very well. [*Sits down in chair.*] What shall I do for you, whistle or sing?

Fanny. Oh, pshaw!

Jeremiah. If I could just look in that office—

Fanny. Nonsense! There is a woman in there with him, and there is a woman out here with you.

Jeremiah. Yes, but his peach is a wind-fall; mine is still on the tree.

Fanny. Please explain.

Jeremiah. You've never been married.

Fanny. That is easily remedied.

Jeremiah. How?

Fanny. Marry me.

Jeremiah. Impossible, until my wife—

Fanny. Your wife!

[*Both jump up.*

Jeremiah. N-n-n-o, I mean Popplеton's wife.

Fanny. Oh!

[*Both sit down. Fanny laughs aside.*

Jeremiah. (*Aside.*) I'm getting moving pictures in my head.

[*Mops face with handkerchief.*

Fanny. That's a lively colored handkerchief.

Jeremiah. Yes, I bought it at a lady's buzz-zar. [*Spreads out handkerchief.*] It's a polka-dot.

Fanny. (*Aside.*) It looks like an aurora borealis. (*Aloud.*) Do you know anything about fast horses—trotting horses?

Jeremiah. Yes. [*Innocently.*] I read about them in my farm journal.

Fanny. Well, in horse-racing it is only a question of who gets ahead.

Jeremiah. Huh, I see. If it weren't

for Ethelinda—

Fanny. Hush!

[*Jeremiah jumps up and peeps over screen.*

Enter Mark Horton and Ethelinda Poppleton from private office.

Jeremiah. (*In low voice to Fanny.*) They've come out!

Ethelinda. Fanny is not here.

[*Fanny peeps around end of screen, Jeremiah over screen.*

Mark. My dear Ethelinda, such love as yours must be rescued from all vulgar contamination.

Ethelinda. I am so happy with you.

Mark. Would we were far away under some moonlit sky where the nightingales sing.

Jeremiah. (*In low voice to Fanny.*) Listen to that, Fanny! Some moonlit sky where—where—the cuckoos coo—

Fanny. Hush!

Ethelinda. Oh, if we were on some lone island!

Jeremiah. (*Aside.*) I'll take her to Coney island.

Mark. This can be no passing dream. No delusion—

Ethelinda. In you, Mark, I have found my affinity.

Jeremiah. (*In low voice to Fanny.*) She has found her affinity! Ttat does settle it.

Fanny. (*In low voice to Jeremiah.*) *What* ails you! I begin to believe, you are after Mrs. Poppleton, yourself. Hush! Look!

[*Fanny and Jeremiah peep. Mark and Ethelinda fondling and loving. Mark kisses Ethelinda passionately.*

Jeremiah. (*To Fanny—low voice.*) He's handing her the hot cakes now.

Fanny. (*Low voice.*) You and I will elope.

Jeremiah. (*Low voice.*) Yes—we'll go to Reno.

Fanny. Hush—look!

[*Fanny and Jeremiah peep.*

Mark. Don't go darling. Fanny has gone home. Don't go. Stay, and we'll lock the door, and have some lunch.

Ethelinda. That will be charming!

Mark. I'll go to the restaurant—

Ethelinda. You will have to hurry. Some one might come.

Mark. What kind of lunch do you like, love?

Ethelinda. (*Archly.*) I always delight in a beer lunch on an occasion of this kind.

Jeremiah. (*Aside.*) A beer lunch! What tie of holy matrimony will hold against a beer lunch!

Mark. I'll go and get the lunch.

[*Exit at door, L.*

Jeremiah. Now, here is where I come on. [*In loud voice.*] Come to my arms, you dear angel of loveliness! [*Throws arms about Fanny.*] I'll marry you, yes, *you.* I'll buy you a diamond ring, a sealskin cloak, an automobile, and a fifteen thousand dollar bungalow in the land of figs and oranges.

[*Ethelinda rushes to screen.*

Fanny. (*Struggling and laughing.*) Oh, you dear Binksy!

Jeremiah. (*Hugging and kissing Fanny.*) I love you, I love you—

Fanny. Oh, Binksy—

Ethelinda. (*With scream.*) Jeremiah!

[*Jeremiah knocks down screen.*

Jeremiah. (*Still hugging Fanny.*) This is no passing dream—

Ethelinda. Jeremiah, you horrid creature, what are you doing with that girl?

Jeremiah. Running a race with you.

I think, I'll win.

Ethelinda. Jeremiah Poppleton listen to me—

Fanny. Are you Jeremiah Poppleton?

Jeremiah. I guess, I am.

Fanny. Then who is Binks from Binktown?

Jeremiah. Binks is Poppleton; Poppleton is Binks.

Fanny. Then you are a married man! [*Mock crying—laughs aside.*] To deceive a poor girl!

Jeremiah. Tut, tut! Don't cry. This race is not over yet.

Enter Mark Horton at door, L. with beer lunch on tray.

Mark. Here is the lunch.

Jeremiah. Horton, my dear fellow, I hope you have brought enough for all.

Mark. (*Angrily.*) I told you four o'clock.

Ethelinda. Why, that is Poppleton! He has been behind that screen all the while. [*Mark drops beer lunch in dismay.*] I found him hugging and kissing your stenographer.

Jeremiah. Yes, and I saw him [*Points to Mark.*] hugging and kissing

my wife.

Mark. You saw *me*—

Jeremiah. Yes, *you*. She called you her affinity. I've found my affinity. Come, Fanny.

[*Mark crosses to Ethelinda, R.*

Mark. I fear there has been a mistake.

[*Fanny gets hat and goes to Jeremiah, L.*

Jeremiah. Get your divorce, Mrs. Poppleton. And, Horton, you get me one too. I have paid you the retainer.

Mark. We are all laboring under a delusion.

Jeremiah. Fanny, as soon as this divorce business is settled, you and I will get married. I don't know whether Horton is worth a copper, but I do know I have a quarter of a million. My canary flew out of my cage. I found another, and I'm well satisfied. Mrs. Poppleton, Mr. Horton, we bid you both, good-day.

[*Jeremiah and Fanny bow extravigantly—going.*

Ethelinda. Jeremiah—dear Jeremiah! I never thought there was so much of shrewd manhood in you. The man who can beat a woman at her own game is the man no woman will willingly give

up. Won't you take me back, dear?

Jeremiah. Fanny, what do you say about it?

Mark. Fanny, listen to me. I have made a mistake. The charm of that most attractive woman led me from you, but now I realize—I—I—won't you—

[*Opens arms.*

Fanny. Yes, yes, Mark.

[*Rushes into his arms.*

Mark. You have conquered.

Ethelinda. May I come to you, Jeremiah?

Jeremiah. Come on.

Ethelinda. (*Advancing towards him.*) I am so ashamed.

Jeremiah. I am, too.

Ethelinda. I'll never do it again.

Jeremiah. I won't, either.

Ethelinda. (*Dropping into his arms.*) You'll forgive me, love, won't you?

Jeremiah. Of course. Fanny, I will give you a thousand dollars in the morning.

Fanny. A thousand dollars!

Jeremiah. Yes, I said I would, if I won. I've won.

Ethelinda. (*To Jeremiah.*) Are you happy, now?

Jeremiah. Yes, I've got my canary.

Ethelinda. Oh, you are such a dear!

Jeremiah. No, I am an Elk.

Mark. (*Grinning.*) Well, you have the dough.

Jeremiah. See here, young man, if you don't marry that girl inside the next ten days, I'll prosecute you for attempted assassination of my wife's character.

Mark. Miss. Fenton and I will be married in a few days, and we extend to you and your charming wife a cordial invitation to be present at our wedding.

Jeremiah. Fanny, I'll give you another thousand the day you are married.

Fanny. How lovely!

Ethelinda. (*To Jeremiah.*) The landlady warned me about a strange gentleman stopping at the hotel. Was that you, love?

Jeremiah. No; that was Mr. Binks from Binktown.

CURTAIN.

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3

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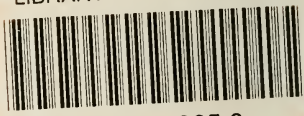
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